

# Reborn Through Fire By Kazuya Higan Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 She is... Dead?

Kisa Becker was in the women's prison. She held her bulging belly and slowly crawled toward the door. She had been locked in for three days, and because of one man's order, she had eaten nothing until now.

The floor near the doorway was strewn with breadcrumbs. Kisa stretched out her painful red hand. She picked up the dirty and cold hard breadcrumbs and put them into her mouth.

Suddenly, the door opened. A voice said, "You have a visitor."

Before Kisa could rejoice, she was roughly dragged out of the cell, cleaned up, and pushed into a visiting room. Through the bars, she finally saw the man she had loved for ten years.

Kisa held back her tears. "How is Grandma?"

"How could you still have the nerve to ask?" Gilbert Kooper grabbed her by the neck with a ruthless look on his face as if he was going to kill her. "Thanks to you, Grandma will never wake up again."

"I can overlook the fact that you climbed into my bed on purpose and abducted Sara, but you shouldn't have harmed Grandma."

Kisa repeatedly shook her head. She had adored Gilbert since she was a child. But ever since she learned that the person he loved was Sara Mitchell, she carefully kept her feelings to herself.

One day on her twentieth birthday, Kisa woke up naked and hungover in Gilbert's bed. A month later, she was found to be pregnant. Gilbert's grandmother threatened to kill herself unless Gilbert married Kisa. After the marriage, he became so disgusted with her that he never came home for the night.

At first, Kisa thought they could live in peace for the rest of their lives. But then Sara disappeared, followed by a phone call from Gilbert's grandmother telling Kisa she had something important to ask Kisa. But when she opened the door, the old lady was seen lying on the floor covered in blood.

"Gilbert, I didn't hurt your grandma. For the sake of the baby, please trust me for once." Kisa pleaded with him.

"The baby?" Gilbert's icy gaze fell on her bulging belly. "Get rid of it. Your child is too dirty!"

The man's heartless words stabbed into her heart like a knife.

"Tell me where Sara is if you still have any conscience left."

Kisa was in complete despair. She shrieked, "I didn't hurt your grandma. I didn't abduct Sara. Why don't you believe me? This is the Kooper family's child; why do you have to be so cruel? Why?"

The man narrowed his eyes. "You are really obstinate. Since this is the case, you may atone for your sins in prison."

Kisa broke down and pounded on the bars as the man departed without showing her mercy.

"Kisa."

Suddenly, a woman walked in with some cotton coats. That was her half-sister, Sharon Case.

"Kisa, I've brought you these cotton coats without him knowing. Gilbert is too ruthless. He won't let me send you anything," said Sharon, her eyes flashing. "Just tell him the whereabouts of that woman. He told me that if you insisted on not telling him the whereabouts of Sara, he'd make your life miserable in this prison."

Kisa's heart ached so much that she almost suffocated. She clutched the lapels of her abdomen forcefully. "Sara's disappearance has nothing to do with me. If he wants my life, then take it," she said in her hoarse voice with a hint of defiance.

Kisa was eventually convicted. The day she was officially transferred to the women's prison was also New Year's Eve. Inside, she was beaten black and blue by some inmates until she could not get up.

In the evening, when everyone went to the New Year's Eve party held in prison, Kisa lay battered on the cold, hard bed, holding her stomach with her hands. She had almost died. Her tears kept falling down when she thought of how heartless Gilbert was.

In her sorrow, a strong and choking smell of smoke suddenly came into the cell. Her heart sank. 'It's a fire.'

Billowing smoke and flame started to leak in through the window.

Kisa gritted her teeth. She got out of bed and dragged her battered body with difficulty toward the door. It was painful to move, but she, at last, made it to the door. However, when she pushed the door, it would not budge.

'How can this be?' Kisa's face instantly went pale. She rapped desperately on the door panel. "Help! Help! Help me!"

At that moment, she heard murmurs outside the door.

"Just mind your own business. Mr. Kooper has made it clear that this woman is to be left to rot and perish."

"Huh? You mean, this fire—"

"Shh, just you know, I know."

As the discussion faded away to the sound of footsteps, Kisa slumped against the door in pain, her heart throbbing and her body shaking. Apparently, Gilbert was going to let her die in this cell. 'The baby is innocent. Did he really loathe me to the point where he could even kill our child?'

The smoke was getting so thick that she could not open her eyes. But thinking of the baby in her womb, she continued to rap the door with all her strength and shouted until her voice turned hoarse, but still no one came to her rescue.

She gripped the floor in pain, mentally reciting Gilbert's name over and over again. 'You once saved my life, and now I give it back to you. After this, I will owe you nothing. If there is an afterlife, I wish we never cross paths again.'

It was another heavy snowfall.

Gilbert tucked his grandmother in and got up to draw the curtains. Just as he walked to the floor-to-ceiling window, his phone rang. He picked up to answer, but in the next second, he froze.

"She is... dead?"

On New Year's Eve of 2015, a fire at Calthon's West Suburban Women's Prison killed an inmate code-named 0037. On the same day, Gilbert Kooper, the CEO of GK Pictures, was blessed with a pair of children, and rumors about the children's mother were all over the place.

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"Aaaaah!"

Kisa woke up again from her nightmare. She hurriedly reached for her belly, the flatness of which caused her heart to sink.

'There is no more. My child was lost in that fire.'

Five years had passed, and that same nightmare haunted her every night. In the dream, a group of people surrounded her, punching and kicking her, and flames engulfed her. There was also the baby, whose skin had turned purple when it stopped breathing, and Gilbert's cold, murderous eyes.

Scenes of that dream lingered in Kisa's mind all the time. Even after five years, it still hurt like hell when she thought about it again.

Suddenly, her phone rang. It was Ariella Kelley calling.

"You slacker, the opening ceremony is about to start. Why haven't you come over yet?"

Kisa was working as Ariella's assistant and body double. Today, Ariella had to attend the opening event of a drama, and she must get to the hotel before the time she said she would.

The bus stopped just at the stop, and Kisa got up while apologizing on the phone. Just then, a scream came violently from her side. "Aah, a monster! She is so ugly."

Kisa, startled, hurriedly covered the burn scars on her face and got off the bus. Standing in front of a street sign, she looked bitterly at the reflection of her skeletal, ugly body and the hideous burn scar on her forehead.

Kisa looked really scary in this way, but she could not help it. She knew it was already a miracle that she survived.

Arriving at the hotel, Kisa was surprised when she saw the setup in the hotel. Her heart sank when she realized it was the costume drama the Goddess of My Adoration produced by GK Pictures.

'Is Ariella acting in a GK drama this time? GK. Gilbert Kooper?' The thought of that man sent chills up her spine. 'No, he won't. A busy man like him won't usually attend such an opening ceremony. But he may not recognize me since my appearance has become like this.'

With such a fluke in mind, Kisa walked toward the hall's entrance. But some security guards stopped her just as she reached there. One security guard could not hide the disgust in his eyes. "You ugly thing, where did you come from? Get out of here. Don't frighten the guests."

"Hi, I'm Ariella's assistant. I—"

The security guard frowned at the coarse, unpleasant voice. "What Ariella? I have never heard of it. Get lost."

At this point, Ariella called again, and Kisa became anxious.

Just then, a woman with exquisite makeup and a flamboyant dress, surrounded by a group of people, came over. Kisa shuddered at seeing the woman. She hurriedly lowered her head and moved to a quiet corner.

“Please come in, Ms. Case.”

“Who’s that?” Sharon asked with a smile as she glanced toward the wizened and unsightly figure not far away.

“Oh, that is just an ugly woman. Good thing is she has gone. Otherwise, she would’ve scared you.”

“Don’t say that. Everyone is equal. Don’t judge people by their looks. Do you understand?”

“You are so kind.”

Kisa’s eyes welled up. It was her sister, Sharon, who had become a glitzy movie star. Kisa was happy for her.

Ariella called again. Although Kisa told Ariella that the security had stopped her, Ariella told her to figure out what to do on her own.

Kisa was thinking about how to enter the event hall when a commotion happened at the hotel’s entrance. A tall, distinguished-looking man walked in slowly. The handsome man had deep-set eyes and a stern look with an intimidating aura.

‘Gilbert?’

Seeing the man, Kisa tensed up, a chill traveling up her spine. Those unbearable memories of the past came back like a tidal wave. She stood still and trembled in fear, telling herself she must not let Gilbert see her; otherwise, he would send her to prison again to atone for that supposed sin. She knew how ruthless Gilbert was.

Just as Kisa was about to flee, she bumped into Ariella, who raised her hand and slapped her without warning. “You good-for-nothing!! I told you to come to me. What are you doing hanging around here?”

After hitting Kisa, Ariella felt something was not right in the atmosphere. She looked up cautiously only to see Gilbert, who had a forbidding look on his face. Ariella was so frightened that she almost went weak at the knees. She craned her neck. “M-Mr. Kooper?”

Gilbert did not look at Ariella but at the cricket-like, bony figure. “Look up,” he said in a commanding voice.

